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“  
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project and look  
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Kentuckians!*  
”

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# Communicator

Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

## The Who, What, Where and How of KDAC

by Abby Coyer and Greta Knigga

**A**re you sometimes the LAST person to find out the latest news? Do you wish that you could be the first? Would you like to be the first to find out the latest news so that you could be the first to try new technology?

If you have answered yes to all three questions, you have come to right place!

This newsletter is dedicated to the Kentucky Deaf Access Consortium (KDAC) and its mission to educate the public on video-conferencing, in particular for use with Deaf and hard of hearing individuals.

If you're asking yourself, "What is KDAC, and what do you mean by video conferencing for Deaf and hard of hearing people?," this newsletter will provide you with a wealth of information, perhaps immediately allowing you to incorporate video conferencing into your home and work.

In short, the Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing joined forces with the Center of Deafness at Eastern Kentucky University, the Kentucky Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, and the Kentucky Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation to combat the need for equitable services among Deaf and hard of hearing individuals rurally located throughout Kentucky. With the funding from the Department of Commerce's Technology Opportunities Program (TOP), they hope to establish a network of at least 28 Deaf Access Stations (DAS) throughout Kentucky for use by both the public and private sectors. The DAS would allow Deaf and hard of hearing individuals to communicate with a Deaf or hearing person through video conferencing.



*Abby Coyer*



*Greta Knigga*

KDAC recently hired two new employees, Abby Coyer and Greta Knigga, to bring the project to full speed. Abby, a Kentucky native, recently moved from San Diego, California, to work on this project as an Outreach Coordinator. Originally from Ohio, Greta serves as a Project Co-Director. Their offices are located in the basement of the Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Frankfort, Kentucky, and at the Center of Deafness at Eastern Kentucky University. They are very excited about this project and look forward to working with all Kentuckians!

To find out more about KDAC and its mission, turn the page and keep reading! If you have any questions that were not answered here, please feel free to contact Greta and Abby at [kdac@mail.state.ky.us](mailto:kdac@mail.state.ky.us).

Together, with the funding from TOP, KDAC believes we can all work for equal access to deaf and hard of hearing individuals throughout Kentucky!

See you on the video-cam!!

*Greta and Abby*

Funding for the KDAC project is provided by the Technology Opportunities Program (TOP), U.S. Department of Commerce.

## Commission Members

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Representative

**Marcie Jeffers**  
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**Donn Jackson**  
Cabinet for Families and Children  
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*The deadline to submit information and articles for the September 2003 edition of the Communicator is August 2003. All materials provided through KCDHH are available in accessible format upon request.*

## KDAC...WHAT?

# KDAC stands for Kentucky Deaf Access Consortium

KDAC is a partnership between the Center on Deafness at Eastern Kentucky University, the Kentucky Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Kentucky Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, and the Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The four partners joined forces to combat the need for equitable services for Deaf and hard of hearing individuals in Kentucky.

## KDAC...WHY?

Even now, in the year 2003, Deaf and hard of hearing individuals in Kentucky *still* do not receive equitable services from public agencies, as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

The rural areas of Kentucky typically do not have access to qualified interpreters, education/training, technology, and/or funds to make equitable access possible to all Kentuckians.

KDAC was formed to face those needs.

Printed with state funds.

## Commission Staff

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## KDAC...HOW?

The Center of Deafness at Eastern Kentucky University, along with three state agencies, the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, and the Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, received a grant from the Technology Opportunities Program (TOP) with the U.S. Department of Commerce.

This grant, over a period of three years, would establish a network of 28 Deaf Access Stations (DAS), demonstrating how up-to-date technology can provide equitable services to all Kentuckians.

## KDAC...WHERE?



KDAC will set up 28 Deaf Access Stations (DAS) throughout Kentucky to allow for equitable access to all Kentuckian. Stay tuned to find out where the 28 DAS will be.

Information for this newsletter was obtained from the following websites:  
AT+T

Communication Access Center  
Federal Relay  
Sorenson VRS  
Sprint / CSD  
TDI

## KDAC...WHO?



## “Partners Working for a Better Tomorrow”

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## What is DAS?



### DAS is Deaf Access Station

DAS is a workstation equipped with video conferencing capabilities and high-speed access. This allows a deaf person to communicate with a deaf or hearing person through the use of video conferencing.

## How CAN you do that with DAS?

- ♦ Video Conferencing
- ♦ Remote Interpreting
- ♦ Remote Captioning
- ♦ Video Relay Service (VRS)

## Requirements for DAS

For DAS, there are currently two options. First, users can communicate via video conferencing through a computer workstation. Secondly, users can use the Sorenson VP-100, a newly devised product that allows users to communicate with others via video conferencing using their television. Either may be purchased through Sorenson. For use on computer workstations, minimum requirements are listed as follows. A computer with minimum requirements:

- ♦ 333 MHz or faster processor
- ♦ 32 MB RAM (64 MB recommended)
- ♦ 20 MB free hard-disk space
- ♦ VGA / SVGA 16-bit color monitor
- ♦ Windows 98/2000/NT/ME
- ♦ Compatible USB Camera:  
Recommended with at least 15 fps (frames per second)
- ♦ High-Speed Internet Access:  
Either DSL, Cable, LAN/WAN
- ♦ Static / Dynamic IP Address
- ♦ Video Conferencing Software:  
With the technology rapidly evolving, newer modes of communicating via video conferencing may emerge. However, these are the two current platforms at this time.

## What can you do with DAS?

- ♦ Meet with your RCD.
- ♦ Negotiate for a loan.
- ♦ Communicate with your academic advisor.
- ♦ Participate in groups.
- ♦ Communicate with your doctor.
- ♦ Talk with your friends.
- ♦ Communicate with your Social Security Representative.
- ♦ Talk with a job coach.
- ♦ Attend meetings.
- ♦ Communicate with your teachers.
- ♦ Meet with your therapist.
- ♦ Talk with a billing company.
- ♦ Communicate with your lawyer.
- ♦ Meet with family members.
- ♦ Many more!
- ♦ The possibilities are endless!





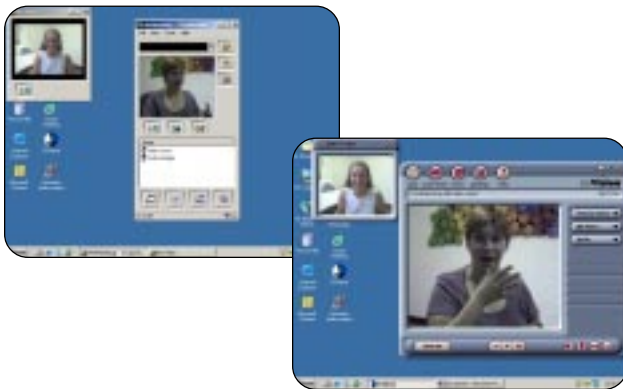
# Things You Can Do With Deaf Access Stations

## Video Conferencing (VC)

### What is Video Conferencing?

**V**ideo conferencing is communication between two or more groups of people, who are at different locations, by use of telecommunications technology.

In addition to videos, video conferencing software typically also includes the capability to transmit sounds, text-based messages, whiteboards, and file transfers during a conference.



### What software do I need?

**W**ith the technology rapidly emerging, there are currently hundreds, if not thousands, of video conferencing software available.

The key is finding the one that enables users to read and understand hand and body movements without interruptions. Sorenson Envision has been a popular choice among Deaf and hard of hearing users. NetMeeting is standard software used by video relay service providers.

Nonetheless, regardless of the software, most video conferencing software operate similarly.



## Video Relay Service (VRS)

### What is Video Relay Service (VRS)?



**V**ideo Relay Service (VRS) is an alternative to the traditional TTY relay service that allows users to communicate to a hearing person through a sign language interpreter.

### How does it work?

**V**RS works very much like the traditional TTY relay service except the deaf individual uses a device to allow him or her to communicate with an interpreter via sign language rather than a keyboard.

### Why use VRS?

**T**here are many reasons for using VRS. This list is not meant to be a comprehensive list, but includes some of the benefits of using VRS.

- ♦ VRS allows users to use American Sign Language (ASL) to communicate with the hearing person.
- ♦ The speed of conversations increases with the use of voice and ASL, and not having to type out each word on a keyboard, a plus for slow typists!
- ♦ ASL, with its facial expressions and body language cues, allows the incorporation of emotions where it might get lost during TTY conversations.
- ♦ Users, both hearing and deaf, do not have use “GA” for “go ahead” or “SK” for “stop keying” to facilitate conversations.
- ♦ With the interpreter watching you via the screen, users can make interruptions as needed or process automated telephone systems faster, as opposed to the traditional TTY relay calls.
- ♦ With these all these benefits together, telephone conversations occurring more naturally, as if they are occurring in real time, without delays.

## Remote Interpreting

### What is Remote Interpreting?



**R**emote interpreting uses video conferencing technology to provide interpreting services without an interpreter available on-site.

Appointments to reserve an interpreter and a DAS will be necessary.

## Remote Captioning

### What is Remote Captioning?



**R**emote captioning is the capability to provide real-time captioning without a captioner available on-site.

Appointments will be necessary to reserve a captioner and a DAS.

## Video Conferencing Etiquette

- ♦ Test equipment in advance.
- ♦ If you are not comfortable with the equipment, practice and practice! Ask for assistance!
- ♦ Arrive 5 to 10 minutes early to set up equipment.
- ♦ Check your self-view for picture quality and speed.
- ♦ When checking your self-view, make sure you can see all of yourself, including your hands and arms if you sign.
- ♦ Be careful of how you dress; solid clothing that does not blend into the background is best.
- ♦ Make sure you have proper lighting on your face. Do not use back lighting. Also, avoid shadows and/or glares.
- ♦ Avoid unnecessary noise that might be distracting such as shuffling papers, tapping pens, or banging on the desk.
- ♦ If using the microphone, make sure the volume is appropriate and the remote parties can hear you clearly.
- ♦ Avoid rocking in your chair or jumpy movements, as this will cause your video to be "jumpy."
- ♦ Maintain eye contact by looking at your self-view.
- ♦ Assume you are always on camera, even when you are not signing/speaking.
- ♦ There may be a delay when using video. Give each person plenty of time to respond, and be sure they have finished before you sign/speak.
- ♦ Don't leave the room unless absolutely necessary. If you have to leave, tell them why.
- ♦ Refrain from obscenity, especially when talking with strangers or working professionals.
- ♦ Turn off cell phones, beepers, watch alarms, pagers, etc.
- ♦ Avoid too much "twiddling" of video or audio quality, as this will be very distracting. Accept imperfections.
- ♦ Be yourself! Act naturally and speak to the remote participants as if they were sitting next to you.
- ♦ Be courteous at all times.

## Benefits to KDAC

**T**here are many benefits to KDAC. They include the following:

- ◆ Provides services to remote areas.
- ◆ Saves travel time.
- ◆ Provides services more quickly than before.
- ◆ Increases the availability of services.
- ◆ Provides access to interpreters.
- ◆ Decreases stress.
- ◆ Provides access to information.
- ◆ Improves communication.

Thanks to:

Greta Knigga  
Abby Coyer  
Tricia Davis  
Anita Dowd

## What are the goals of KDAC?

- ◆ Increase equitable access for ALL Deaf and hard of hearing users in Kentucky.
- ◆ Establish a network of at least 28 public Deaf Access Stations (DAS) across the state of Kentucky.
- ◆ Provide outreach to state agencies and consumers on the use of DAS.
- ◆ Train state employees and consumers how to use DAS.
- ◆ Encourage the use of DAS workstations by Deaf and hard of hearing individuals at home and work.
- ◆ Provide troubleshooting and other technical help as requested.
- ◆ And remember that the possibilities are endless!

## Evaluation of KDAC

**T**he goals of KDAC are carefully monitored to assess its strengths and weaknesses, to ensure that the quality of services improves. Ways of measuring the use of the KDAC are provided through the following:

- ◆ Surveys
- ◆ Case Studies
- ◆ Questionnaires
- ◆ Interviews

These measurements will evaluate the satisfaction of users, the change of quantity and quality of services, the amount of information shared during video conferencing versus alternative forms, reduction of isolation experienced, sense of immediacy, increased access to interpreters, and much more. Although participation is voluntary, we hope everyone will contribute their thoughts on KDAC so that services can be improved!

## For More Information on KDAC

E-mail Greta and Abby at  
[kdac@mail.state.ky.us](mailto:kdac@mail.state.ky.us)

Watch out for KDAC's new website!

[www.kydeafaccess.org](http://www.kydeafaccess.org)  
[www.kydeafaccess.net](http://www.kydeafaccess.net)  
[www.kydeafaccess.com](http://www.kydeafaccess.com)



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FUN



QUIZ

Questions:

1. What is the acronym for KDAC?
2. How many stations does KDAC plan to implement?
3. Do you need a computer for video conferencing?
4. What is the acronym for DAS?
5. Is it polite to maintain eye-contact with your self-view when communicating via video conferencing?

Answers:  
1. Kentucky Deaf Access Consortium  
2. 28  
3. No. Sorenson now has a videophone that allows users to communicate via their television screen.  
4. Deaf Access Station  
5. Yes